

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 0226

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MNVC TECH PARM PK

SUBJECT: THE NUCLEAR ISSUE

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 13227; (B) ISLAMABAD 13074

1. BHUTTO WAS SO COMPLETELY ABSORBED IN DOMESTIC MATTERS DURING THE LAST THREE DAYS AT LARAKANA THAT FOR THE MOST PART HE KEPT HIS FOREIGN GUESTS OCCUPIED BY WIDE RANGING PARTRIDGE HUNTS IN THE SIND WHILE HE CLOSETED HIMSELF WITH HIS KEY ADVISERS AND POLITICIANS. IN THE PROCESS HE ANNOUNCED A MAJOR LAND REFORM (HIS LAST REFORM BEFORE ELECTIONS) AND PREPARED FOR PLACING THE ELECTORAL ORDINANCES BEFORE PARLIAMENT (WHICH HE PERSONALLY DID LAST NIGHT). I HAD SOME TIME ALONE WITH HIM HOWEVER THURSDAY NIGHT BEFORE DINNER. I AM LEFT TO THE CONCLUSION THAT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE ON THE REPROCESSING ISSUE.

2. BHUTTO HAD TOLD ME BEFORE OUR MEETING IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS OF HIS IRRITATION OVER THE HARSHNESS OF THE RECENT PUBLIC REMARKS OF THE CANADIAN FOREIGN MINISTER. WHEN WE WERE ALONE HE SAID HE HAD AUTHORIZED AZIZ AHMED TO RESPOND BY MAKING PUBLIC THE FACTS ABOUT THE CANADIAN NEGOTIATIONS AS THEY SAW THEM, BUT HE WAS SORRY AZIZ HAD HIMSELF BEEN SO CATEGORICAL

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ABOUT THE REPROCESSING PLANT AS HE HAD BEEN IN REPLY TO A QUESTION. HE SAID AZIZ HAD TELEPHONED HIM SAYING HE HAD TRIED FOR HOURS TO REACH HIM FOR FINAL GUIDANCE PRIOR TO HIS PRESS CONFERENCE. HE THEN READ TO BHUTTO HIS STATEMENT REFERRED TO ABOVE AND ASKED IF HE HAD GONE TOO FAR. BHUTTO SAID HE TOLD HIM IT WAS TOO LATE TO ASK AS IT HAD ALREADY BEEN DONE. LATER ON IN OUR

TALK HE MUSED THAT EACH REPEAT OF THEIR PUBLIC STAND ON THE CONTINUING CONTRACT WITH THE FRENCH MADE IT THAT MUCH HARDER. NEEDLESS TO SAY I AGREED WITH THE OBVIOUS.

3. IN MY FIRST TALK AFTER RETURNING HERE OUR CONVERSATION WAS BROAD AND GENERAL AND HARDLY CONDUCIVE TO THE INTRODUCTION OF WRITTEN TEXTS ON MY PART. THIS TIME HOWEVER I GAVE HIM SUGGESTED WORDING ON POSSIBLE FORMULAS FOR "DELAY". I USED THE GERMAN AND FRENCH FORMULA IN IRAN AS CONTAINED IN MY TALKING PAPER PREPARED IN THE DEPT. AND ANOTHER FORMULA WHICH I UNDERSTOOD MIGHT EVENTUATE IN THE BRAZILIAN CASE. BHUTTO BLINKED HARD AS HE READ THEM, BUT THEN ASKED IF HE COULD KEEP THE LANGUAGE AND DISCUSS IT WITH AZIZ AND SHAHI. I AGREED WITH THE PROVISIO THAT THERE WAS NOTHING SACROSANCT ABOUT THE LANGUAGE ITSELF. IT WAS MERELY MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE TYPE OF THING I BELIEVED WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE AND I WOULD HAVE TO CLEAR ANY FINAL WORDING WITH WASHINGTON.

4. I ASKED BHUTTO IF HE COULD CONTEMPLATE SECRET TALKS WITH US IN THE WEEKS AHEAD TO TRY TO REACH A FULL SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM. HE SAID HE WANTED TIME NOW FOR A FULL REVIEW OF ALL THIS WITH SOME OF HIS KEY PEOPLE. HE SAID HE WAS LOOKING AT THE SUBJECT IN ITS BROADEST POSSIBLE TERMS. HE THOUGHT THERE WAS NEW EVIDENCE TO CAUSE CONCERN OVER THE INTENTIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION, NOT ONLY LOCALLY, BUT ON A GLOBAL SCALE AND THAT IT WOULD SEEM VITAL FOR PAKISTAN TO
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ATTEMPT TO RETAIN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA. HE ADDED THAT HE, OF COURSE, WANTED TO KEEP RIGHT ON WORKING ON THIS WITH ME AND THAT THERE NEED BE NO DELAY IN OUR TALKS BECAUSE OF HIS ELECTIONS.

5. I TOLD BHUTTO THAT I COULD BE WRONG, BUT THAT I WAS PROCEEDING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER HIS REPROCESSING PLANS WOULD NOT WORK OUT AS THE SUPPLIER NATIONS WOULD NOT LET IT BE SO. THEREFORE MY CONTINUED SEARCH FOR THE BEST ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENT POSSIBLE. HE TOOK THIS CALMLY, MERELY SAYING THAT I HAD BEEN RIGHT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT IN THE LAST THREE YEARS.

6. I THINK THIS REPRESENTS SLOW PROGRESS AND MOST CERTAINLY NOT RETROGRESSION AND HARDNESS ON THE PART OF BHUTTO AS COULD HAVE HAPPENED AT THE OPENING OF HIS ELECTION PROCESS.

7. POSTSCRIPT: FOR THOSE WHO MAY BE WORKING ON A PACKAGE DEAL, THE FOLLOWING CAME OUT AS ELEMENTS OF A PACKAGE AS BHUTTO SEES IT; (1) CONTINUED HELP IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE AS GENEROUS AS WE FIND POSSIBLE; (2) DROP ANY CONTINUED EFFORT ON OUR PART TO CLASSIFY MILITARY EQUIPMENT AS EITHER DEFENSIVE OR OFFENSIVE, WHICH HE SEES AS UNNECESSARILY IRRITATING AND INDICATIVE OF A LACK OF TRUST IN OUR RELATIONSHIP AND (3) HONORING THEIR REQUEST FOR THE A-7 AIRCRAFT WITH FMS CREDITS.
BYROADE

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